

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 06135 251446Z
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 06135

EXDIS

FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG FROM AMBASSADOR EILTS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EG, US
SUBJ: MESSAGE FOR GOE OFFICIALS

REF: USUN 652

1. AFTER ATHERTON'S AND MY MEETINGS WITH SADAT YESTERDAY IN ISMAILIA, I STAYED BEHIND FOR A FEW MOMENTS TO CONVEY YOUR APOLOGIES FOR ANY MISUNDERSTANDING CAUSED BY YOUR STATEMENT ABOUT REASONS FOR THE SALE OF AIRCRAFT TO EGYPT. I EXPLAINED THE PURPOSE OF YOUR MIAMI AND PHILADELPHIA STATEMENTS AND THE AUDIENCES TO WHOM YOU WERE SPEAKING AND REITERATED YOUR APOLOGIES AND CONTINUED ADMIRATION.

2. SADAT WAS UNQUESTIONABLY UPSET. HE SAID THAT TO HAVE SUGGESTED PUBLICLY THAT THE ADMINISTRATION DECISION TO PROVIDE F-5'S TO EGYPT WAS TO PREVENT A MILITARY COUP AGAINST SADAT WAS "A MAD THING TO DO." AS THE STATEMENT BEGINS TO RIPPLE OUTWARDS, IT WILL CAUSE HIM PROBLEMS AT HOME AND WITH HIS ARAB CRITICS.

3. I ASSURED HIM THAT YOU HAD NO SUCH INTENTION AND
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REGRETTED ANY EMBARRASSMENT THAT YOUR REMARKS MIGHT HAVE CAUSED HIM. HE SAID HE WAS SURE THERE HAD BEEN NO DELIBERATE EFFORT TO EMBARRASS HIM AND HE ASSUMED THAT IT WAS DUE TO A LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AS TO WHAT IS GOING ON IN EGYPT. HE WOULD NONETHELESS HAVE TO UNDERTAKE A DAMAGE LIMITATION JOB. WE LEFT IT AT THAT.

4. COMMENT: YOU COULD NOT HAVE HIT SADAT ON A MORE SENSITIVE NERVE THAN BY SUGGESTING PUBLICLY THAT THE F-5'S ARE BEING PROVIDED IN ORDER TO PREVENT A MILITARY COUP AGAINST HIM. PERHAPS YOU WERE MISQUOTED, BUT THIS IS THE WAY PRESS REPORTS CARRIED UR REMARKS. HE WILL SMART ABOUT THIS FOR A LITTLE WHILE, BUT HOPEFULLY HIS SENSE OF OUTRATE WILL SUBSIDE WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME.

5. THERE IS INDEED A POLITICAL JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROPOSED F-5E AIRCRAFT SALE TO EGYPT, BUT NOT RPT NOT IN TERMS OF PREVENTING A MILITARY COUP. I HAVE CONSTANTLY MADE THE POINT TO VISITING CONGRESSMEN AND OTHERS THAT THE SALE OF F-5E'S CAN BE POINTED TO BY SADAT TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE ALL IMPORTANT EGYPTIAN MILITARY THAT HIS POLICY OF WORKING WITH THE UNITED STATES BRINGS SOME TANGIBLE BENEFITS TO THE MILITARY AS WELL AND IS NOT INTENDED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY DEFENSELESS. THUS, IT STRENGTHENS EGYPTIAN MILITARY SUPPORT FOR SADAT AND HIS POLICIES. ANY SUCH MILITARY SALE WILL NOT ALTER THE BALANCE OF POWER, WHICH IS OVERWHELMINGLY IN ISRAEL'S FAVOR. EILTS

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